About pickling problems

Common Causes Of Pickling Problems

(Note: Because of many requests, this information is being reprinted. This is the second in the series of two articles about pickling.)

Many questions are asked each summer about pickling problems. I wish to share with you some information this week that may save you from having problems with your pickling. It is interesting to note that homemakers are pickling more foods and trying new and different recipes.

Hollow pickles may be caused by too much time elapsing between picking and pickling. A good commonsense rule is to start the processing as soon as possible after picking or purchasing. If pickling cannot begin immediately, refrigerate or spread pickles out where they will be well ventilated and cool.

When pickling cucumbers, fully developed cucumbers will sometimes be hollow when they are sliced when removed from the brine solution. Check whole cucumbers while washing. The hollow cucumbers will usually float. These cucumbers can be recycled into relishes or chunk style pickles.

Soft or slippery pickles may be caused by too little salt or acid. When selecting a recipe, be sure to follow that recipe. Use one that has been tested if possible. Another cause of soft or slippery pickles is when cucumbers are not thoroughly washed. If the blossom end or stem have not been removed, this can cause an enzymatic action which will soften the pickle; therefore, making it undesirable. Sometimes when pickles are packed in a vinegar solution, they tend to absorb the vinegar solution and are not covered. This, too, will cause soft pickles.

Jars should always be sealed airtight. Cap each jar immediately after packing and prior to processing. This, too, is another reason why some pickles become soft or soppery during storage. Insufficient heat treatment can also cause a poor quality finished product.

There are several causes of **dark pickles**. Sometimes there may be minerals in your water, especially iron. This can have a darkening effect as you put your pickles in brine or any type of water solution. Never use ground spices in place of whole spices. This, too, can have a darkening effect. An example of this would be using ground cinnamon in place of stick cinnamon or chipped cinammon for pickling peaches. Never use iodized salt. This, too has a darkening effect on pickles. Sometimes people use too much spice, overcook or use an iron utensil in preparation, thus causing darkening.

Shriveled pickles also may be caused by using too much salt, too much sugar or vinegar at the start of the pickling process. Again, I wish to remind you, use a standard recipe, one that has been tested and please follow it carefully.

It is extremely important to use a crock or stone jar, unchipped enamel lined pan or a large glass jar, bowl, of casserole for fermenting or brining pickles. Never use a plastic container. Vegetables being pickled undergo a physical, as well as chemical change during the brining or fermentation processes. As the result of these changes, the plastic may be affected, causing undesirable compounds to be formed or leached from the plastic. This, too, is another problem that can cause an inferior product that does not have the right flavor or could even be chemically harmful to you.

It is extremely important in order to get a good pickle product to use the right type of vinegar. Use cider vinegar or white distilled vinegar of four percent to six percent acidity. Most of the vinegar on the grocery store shelf has five percent acidity. Never dilute vinegar unless the recipe so specifies. This, too, can cause a problem because vinegar is used as a preservative.

Should you have a pickling or food prfeservation problem, please call 352 8244 or write the Appomattox County Extension Office, P.O. Box 488, Appomattox, Va. 24522. It is always a pleasure to help you with your homemaking questions or problems.

Have a good week, homemakers!

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Sadie's Green Tomato Pickle

7 lbs. firm, medium-sized, sliced green tomatoes

Soak in two gallons lime water (3 cups lime to 2 gallons water) for 24 hours. Drain and soak for 24 hours in fresh water, changing water every 6 hours. Make a syrup of 5 pounds sugar, 3 pints vinegar and 1 teaspoon each of cloves, ginger, allspice, celery seed, mace and cinnamon. Bring to a boil and pour over tomatoes. Let stand overnight. In the morning, boil for one hour and seal in jars. Many thanks to Mrs. Sadie Brightwell for sharing this delicious recipe with us. She is a member of the Pamplin Extension Homemakers Club.

Good news for homemakers

By Shirley W. Walton
Extension Agent

It's grub time

By James A. Smith
Extension Agent

It's that time of year when cattle need to be treated for grubs. A number of cattle owners suggest that we will probably have a heavy infestation of grubs since the heel fly appeared earlier and in larger numbers this year.

Dry or non-lactating dairy cattle can be treated with Co-Ral pour-on, spray or with Tiguvon, Neguvon or Warbex.

Beef cattle can be treated with Co-Ral spray or pour-on, Prolate, Warbex, Tiguvon, Neguvon or Fenthion.

Treatment dates range from August 1 to November 1. Many beef producers will be getting cattle up for vaccination in the coming weeks. This is a good time to treat for grubs - **Caution:** some of these materials may not be given with worming agents. Read the label before purchasing and again before application.

* * *

If your cattle are not wearing an ear-tag for fly control some of these materials, like warbex, will significantly reduce horn flies for two to three weeks. There will be little affect to face flies.

* * *

Tobacco sampled in Virginia for M-H 30 levels last season showed levels well below that acquired by The German Government.

We need to stay on top of this and keep M-H 30 application in accordance with the label or if possible not at all.

* * *

It's time to treat peach trees for borers. Commercial growers are using restricted use insecticides for this purpose.

Home gardners can use paradichlorobenzine Crystals with fairly good success. Often times moth crystals contain this material-read the label. Timing is critical. Detail treating information is available from this office.

* * *

Coming up this Saturday is the summer picnic for the Appomattox Cattlemen Association and families. It will be held on The Tommy Spain Farm in the edge of Prince Edward County. All person interested in affiliating with this group are invited. We do need to know how many to prepare for - so call if you plan to attend. Cost is $2.50 per person.

* * *

Those planning to consign cattle to the Lynchburg Feeder Sales will need to arrange for The Director (W. E. Bondurant, Jr.) or his representative to be present when cattle are vaccinated. Certification forms are available from this office.

* * *

Dairy and beef producers need to get heifers (Calf-hood) vaccinated. There were an estimated 1805 heifers on farms in this county June 1. Only 474 have been vaccinated. A vaccinated herd is essential if we are going to eliminate brucellosis.

"The South 40"
by JAMES A. SMITH
EXTENSION AGENT

CLASSIFIED ADS... for results

ASCS Today

By Tom Conrad

ASCS invites comments on conservation programs

Appomattox county farmers and other interested persons are invited to submit comments and suggestions concerning conservation and environmental programs to USDA's ASCS.

The program include the agricultural conservation, emergency conservation and water bank programs.

The written recommendations must be received in Washington by Sept. 1 to be considered.

ASCS conservation programs are designed to encourage farmers to voluntarily perform pollution abatement, soil, water and emergency conservation measures. The programs authorize cost share funds for farmers who could not or would not perform such practices to the extent needed without some federal assistance.

USDA is also holding a public meeting on Sept. 9 to review program recommendations made by State and county agricultural conservation review groups. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m., in room 1960 of USDA's South Building. Because of space limitation, persons desiring to attend the meeting should make reservations by calling (202) 447-6221.

Farmers who cannot attend are encouraged to submit written comments.

The written remarks should be addressed to the Director, Conservation and Environmental Protection Division, USDA-ASCS, P. O. Box 2415, Room 3610 South Building, Washington, D. C. 20013.

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